

Application No. 10/712,775
Attorney Docket No.2557-000216/US

REMARKS

Claims 1-30 and 51-60 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 4, 16, 19, 51, and 52 have been amended and claim 61 has been newly added. No new matter has been introduced. Claims 1, 16, and 19 are independent claims.

Drawings

The Examiner is thanked for her indication that the replacement drawings are acceptable.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1-2, 4, 6-8, 11-16, 19-21, 23-24, 28-30, and 51-60 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,306,564 to Mullee as evidenced by U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0014257 to Chandra et al. or WO 02/11191. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the following reasons.

In Mullee, supercritical CO₂ is used in both the first and second resist removal steps. However, in example embodiments, the treatment with supercritical CO₂ is performed separately from the treatment with ozone, for example, the treatment with ozone does not include supercritical CO₂. Applicants have amended independent claims 1 and 16 and added new dependent claim 61 to clarify this difference.

Applicants respectfully submit that dependent claims 2, 4, 6-8, 11-15, and 51-56 are allowable by virtue of their dependency on allowable independent claims 1 or 16, for at least the reasons set forth above.

Further, Mullee does not disclose depressurizing the chamber between the first and second resist removal steps. Independent claim 19 has been amended to clarify this difference.

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Applicants respectfully submit that dependent claims 20-21, 23-24, 28-30, and 57-60 are allowable by virtue of their dependency on allowable independent claim 19, for at least the reasons set forth above.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claim 3 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,306,564 to Mullee in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,770,426 to Vaartstra, Liu and Shibata. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the following reasons.

Applicants respectfully submit that dependent claim 3 is allowable by virtue of its dependency on allowable independent claim 1, for at least the reasons set forth above, as Vaartstra, Liu and Shibata fail to make up for the deficiency set forth above with respect to Mullee.

Claims 5, 17 and 22 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,306,564 to Mullee in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,770,426 to Vaartstra. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the following reasons.

Applicants respectfully submit that dependent claims 5, 17 and 22 are allowable by virtue of their dependency on allowable independent claims 1, 16, and 19, respectively, for at least the reasons set forth above, as Vaartstra fails to make up for the deficiency set forth above with respect to Mullee.

Claims 9-10, 18, and 25-27 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,306,564 to Mullee.

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Applicants respectfully submit that dependent claims 9-10, 18, and 25-27 are allowable by virtue of their dependency on allowable independent claims 1, 16, and 19, respectively, at least the reasons set forth above.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the various rejections and allowance of each of claims 1-30 and 51-61 is respectfully requested

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact John A. Castellano, Reg. No. 35,094 at the telephone number of the undersigned below to schedule a personal interview.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-0750 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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By

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